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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 002000

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EUN](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/EU: SEPTEMBER 15 GAERC TO FOCUS ON
EXTERNAL ISSUES

REF: A. A) STATE 151189

[1](#)B. B) STATE 150777

Classified By: Political Counselor Andrew J. Schofer; reasons 1.4 (b) a
nd (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The September 15 GAERC will focus
exclusively on "external" issues rather than "general" issues
such as enlargement, according to Dutch MFA contacts. The
Dutch will continue to push for Serbian cooperation with ICTY
but believe it is too early for a meaningful GAERC discussion
on Kosovo. On Sudan, the Dutch see events moving in the
wrong direction but expect to pledge additional funds anyway.

The GAERC may call on Congolese parties to sign a "code of
conduct" prior to the next round of elections. While the
Dutch see the situation in the Middle East improving, they
will hold the new Palestinian Government to the Quartet's
conditions and do not support engaging with Syria at this
time. The GAERC will endorse the Iraqi Compact and seeks to
increase Iraqi "ownership" of internal developments.
Discussion of ref b points on Iran reported separately. END
SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) POLCOUNS delivered reftels points to Desiree Kopmels
(European Correspondent and Deputy Political Director) and
Marissa Gerards (Deputy Director for European Integration
Affairs) at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on
September 13. POLCOUNS also separately discussed ref b Iran
points with Wim Geerts, Deputy Director General of Political
Affairs. Kopmels and Gerards noted that the September 15
ministerial meeting would be unusual because the agenda was
exclusively focused on external, rather than general, affairs
-- a situation Kopmels suggested had not occurred since the
EU expanded to 25 members. According to Gerards, significant
enlargement-related issues and other general affairs would
probably not be addressed until the later October and
mid-November GAERC's.

Western Balkans

[1](#)3. (C) Kopmels said she expected most of the discussion of
Balkans issues to be "boring" and predictable. With regard
to Bosnia and Herzegovina, she agreed that current rhetoric
is "not good" and progress toward stabilization is too slow.
In this context, reforming the police sector is an especially
critical task. Kopmels said the Netherlands will continue to
highlight the need for Serbia to cooperate with the ICTY in
the GAERC. On Kosovo, Kopmels stressed that the EU did not
want to undermine Ahtisaari's efforts; the September 15
GAERC, therefore, was "too early" for a substantive GAERC

discussion as Ahtisaari has not yet finished his report.

Sudan

14. (C) Kopmels described the situation on the ground in Sudan as deeply troubling. The fact that Khartoum had withdrawn its ultimatum to the AU is a "better signal," but the Sudanese government's build-up of troops and the continuing failure of all parties to agree to the cease-fire agreement suggest that things are moving in the wrong direction. The GAERC will endorse UNSCR 1706 on transferring AMIS to UN forces, she said, but finding ways to actually move the process forward will be difficult. Kopmels noted that Dutch development minister van Ardenne would be speaking to Parliament about Sudan this week but was not expected to attend the GAERC. Reconstruction is not going well in the South despite additional humanitarian aid pledges, she added.

Democratic Republic of Congo

15. (C) According to Kopmels, the GAERC would express concern about the violence in July and may call on all parties to sign a "code of conduct" committing them to act with restraint going into the next round of elections this fall. Kopmels stressed that the presence of EU troops and observers on the ground was a strong motivation for the EU to press for a signed code of conduct, but noted that the language on this subject was still in brackets.

Israeli-Palestinian Issues/Lebanon/Syria

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16. (C) Noting that the situation in the Middle East had been discussed extensively at the August 25 extraordinary session, Kopmels described subsequent developments as generally positive. She expressed hope that the formation of a Palestinian government could be a step in the right direction, but stressed that the Dutch would continue to insist that any Palestinian government observe the Quartet's three conditions. On Lebanon, Kopmels said the GAERC would recognize the lifting of the blockade and the deployment of European UNIFIL troops as good steps. Asked whether the EU would discuss engagement with Syria, Kopmels argued that, as far as the Dutch were concerned, it was "too soon" to engage. While Syrian involvement would be necessary at some stage, she added, Damascus first has to prove it is serious about playing a constructive regional role -- which it has so far failed to do.

Iraq

17. (C) The upcoming GAERC will express support for the recent Iraqi Compact, according to Kopmels, and will review recent developments. Otherwise, Kopmels did not expect "anything heavy" to be on the table. She added that the EU's prime interest at this point is ensuring that the Iraqi government increases its "ownership" of the process.

Ukraine

18. (U) Kopmels and Gerards did not expect Ukraine to be on the agenda for the September 15 meeting.

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